

THE CONFESSION

A Motion Picture

“Exceptionally Lurring”

“Dripping with Personality”

“Inventive Action”

“Scintillating Dialogue”

“Fantastic Nuanced Characters”

“Riviting & Beautiful”

“Emotionally Charged”


“Marketplace Potential: 10”

**“This film is in the top 10%.
It must be made.”**



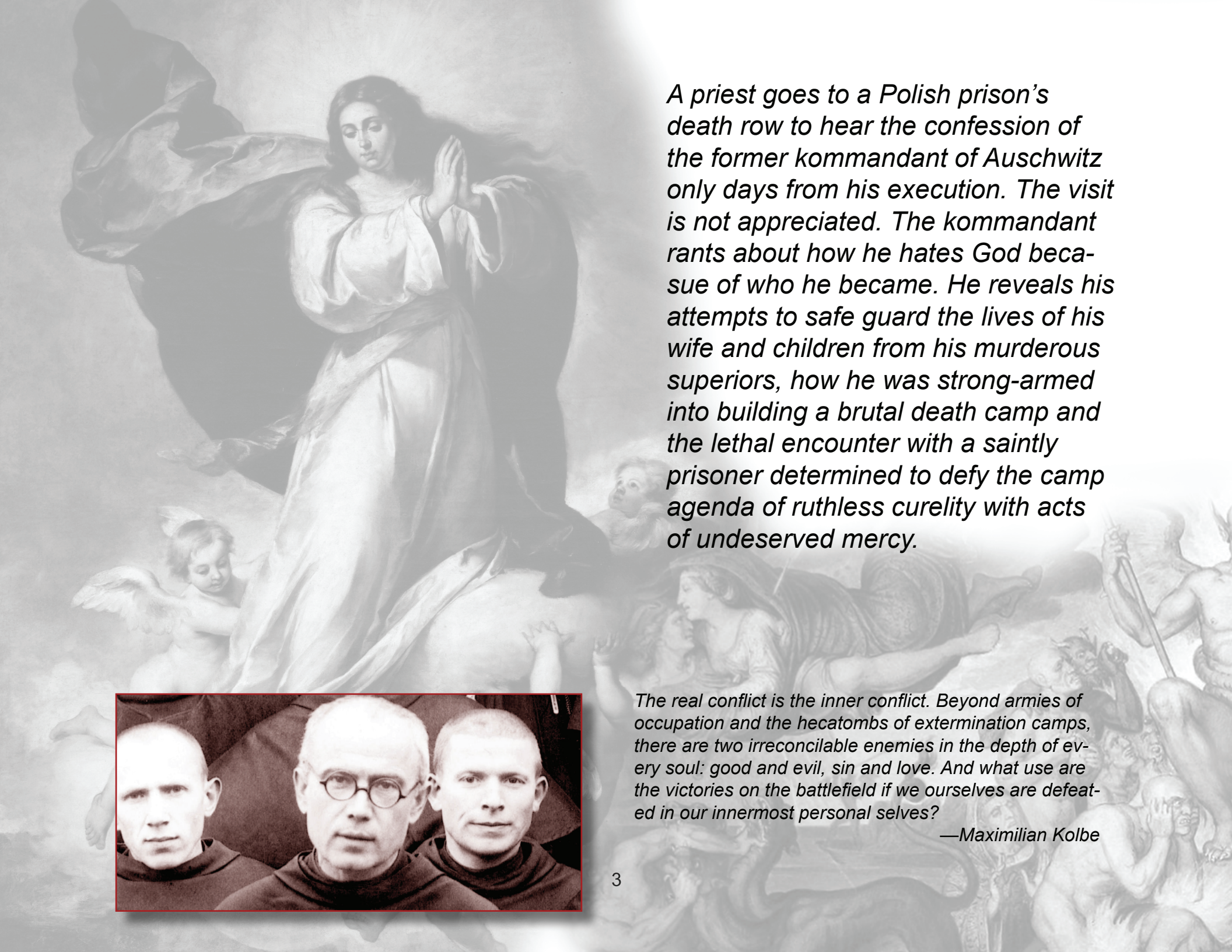
By examining these little men and women and their little hatreds, we can learn from this history. It will be the little men and women and their little hatreds who may once again be a tidal wave of destruction that will sweep humanity into another age of horror.

— Steven J. Paskuly

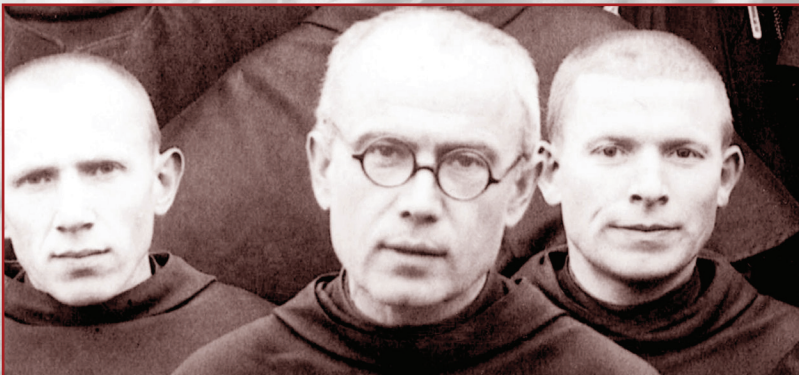


“Bold and human, it is a powerful script that dares to go to a dark, disturbing, but ultimately redemptive place most movies about the Holocaust wouldn’t attempt.”

— THE BLACKLIST



A priest goes to a Polish prison's death row to hear the confession of the former kommandant of Auschwitz only days from his execution. The visit is not appreciated. The kommandant rants about how he hates God because of who he became. He reveals his attempts to safe guard the lives of his wife and children from his murderous superiors, how he was strong-armed into building a brutal death camp and the lethal encounter with a saintly prisoner determined to defy the camp agenda of ruthless curelity with acts of undeserved mercy.



The real conflict is the inner conflict. Beyond armies of occupation and the hecatombs of extermination camps, there are two irreconcilable enemies in the depth of every soul: good and evil, sin and love. And what use are the victories on the battlefield if we ourselves are defeated in our innermost personal selves?

—Maximilian Kolbe

SYNOPSIS

The Confession of Rudolf Höss is based on the true story of a German boy who gives up his dream to be a Catholic priest and becomes instead history's most cruel and notorious mass murderer—the Nazi Kommandant of Auschwitz. It is there that he meets his match—one of his prisoners—a humble Franciscan priest who teaches the benevolent power of mercy.

APRIL 1947. A Catholic priest with a unique past, enters a don-geon-like Polish prison and is ushered to the secure cell of Rudolf Höss, who is on death row for his role as the longest serving Kommandant of the infamous Nazi extermination camp, Auschwitz. The priest has come to hear Höss's confession before his execution, days later. Instead the prisoner rejects the offer of forgiveness and recounts how, as a loving husband and father, he was groomed to be a ruthless concentration camp kommandant for the Third Reich. His weapons were cruelty and repression, the same tools his superiors used to threaten his family if Höss didn't comply. Sent to Poland, he's made the kommandant of Auschwitz where he is ordered to create a massive labor force in the local mines to fuel the German war effort. He's also ordered to implement Hitler's Final Solution for the Jews—their extermination.

On his doorstep one morning, Höss finds a magazine published by Father Maximilian Kolbe, a passionate, Franciscan priest, writer and visionary, who has formed a spiritual army called the "Knights of the Immaculata." The magazine is about Mary as a great intercessor for mercy and forgiveness. Höss trashes the publication.

While moving to Poland, Höss's wife, Hedwig, discovers a statue of the Virgin Mary from Lourdes, France and pictures taken with his father next to a statue of St. Bernadette of Lourdes. On the bottom is a note from Höss's strict and abusive Catholic father, "This is the day I dedicated you to the Immaculate. Love Papa." But Höss suffers from flashbacks of the time as a boy that his priest broke the seal of confession, told his father what Young Höss had confessed, and then his father's terrible beatings. There was no mercy shown to Young Höss. So, at Auschwitz, to get results, Höss orders his guards to show "no mercy."

When the Knights of the Immaculata magazine shows up a second time on Höss's doorstep he orders the publisher arrested. Kolbe is brought to Auschwitz. To keep up the hopes and spirits of all the war-beaten Polish prisoners Kolbe performs small acts of kindness. Kolbe, however, is persecuted and tormented by the sadistic Nazi guards and Höss.

As Höss builds up Auschwitz with deputy Kommandant Karl Fritz, he takes extreme measures to achieve results. Next to the concentration camp, he steals a local villa from a widow and her children (murdering the mother) to make sure his wife and children are close and have the best. Hedwig, ignorant of her husband's atrocities, would later call the villa "paradise."



Adolf Eichmann (a major organizer of the Holocaust) gives new orders for Höss to convert Auschwitz into a massive extermination center to implement the Final Solution for the Jews. Höss struggles with the enormity of the task but there is no way out for him and his family if he fails the Führer. As Kolbe progresses with acts of mercy throughout Auschwitz, he gains the attention of Höss. Höss confronts Kolbe and demands that he abandon his futile acts, for Höss, like a god, holds Kolbe's life in his hands. Kolbe defends his actions, as coming from God not man.

BUT THEN A PRISONER ESCAPES FROM KOLBE'S BARRICKS.

As a reprisal, ten prisoners are sentenced to starve to death. Franciszek Gajowniczek, is selected to die, but Kolbe requests to switch places with the condemned. When asked why, Kolbe responds, "Franciszek has a family and I am a Catholic priest". The switch is allowed. This Christ-like sacrifice moves Höss to try to understand its power. Later, Höss decides to demonstrate an act of mercy by pardoning Father Władysław Lohn, S.J., a priest in the camp who was caught trying to sneak in and help prisoners. As Kolbe starves in the bunker he manages to inspire his fellow condemned prisoners to trust in God and sing praises. The other prisoners die, but Kolbe does not. Finally, on August 14, 1941 Höss orders the camp doctor to inject



Kolbe with carbolic acid, but the doctor can't do it, so Höss does. The next day, on the Feast of the Assumption of Mary, Kolbe's body is cremated.

Höss hopes Kolbe's death will bring him peace. Instead it only brings restless nights and torment, and his wife Hedwig discovers the cruel nature of Auschwitz's existence and her husband's role in it.

When the war ends Höss is hunted down, tried at Nuremberg, and sentenced to be hung at Auschwitz for his war crimes. While being held in

a Polish prison Höss is treated with unexpected kindness by Polish guards, some of whom bear Auschwitz prisoner tattoos...and Höss is shamed. Weeks before his execution Höss desperately asks for a priest to hear his final confession. But no priest will come. The Allied guards say, "he will rot in Hell, as he deserves." Emotionally distraught Höss turns against God and tries to undo his previous request for a priest to hear his confession, but God intervenes on his behalf.

Miraculously, the priest Höss pardoned from Auschwitz years earlier, Father Władysław Lohn, shows up to hear Höss's final confession.

But Höss argues with Lohn about God's mercy, rejecting the idea. As Höss recounts his life, he is nonetheless confronted with true remorse for his actions, and Władysław administers the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and the next day Communion and Viaticum, God's final solution of mercy.

Five days later, on the Feast of St. Bernadette of Lourdes, April 16, 1947, with witnesses nearby, Höss dies on the gallows. As he dies, he looks out at the formerly dire landscape of Auschwitz that is now taken over by beautiful yellow dandelions. It's then, in his final moments of consciousness that he is overcome by a terrifying vision of great irony.

*Raised to be a priest he became a soldier and a mass murderer.
Another, wanting to be a soldier, became a priest.*

In the end...

*The soldier kills the priest,
but the priest opens the door to God's mercy.*



THE LOOK (2.35:1)

Present Day
Color - Noir



Flashbacks
Black & White - "Winded" - Noir



STORY FUNDAMENTALS

- TITLE: THE CONFESSION of Auschwitz's Kommandant
- GENRE: Wartime Drama
- ERA: WW2
- SETTING: Germany and Occupied Poland
- DEMOGRAPHIC: 25 to Seniors, Male and Female
- HOOK: The S.S. kommandant of a Nazi concentration camp answers to a sickly Franciscan priest.
- LOG LINE: A tormented Nazi officer, in an attempt to safe guard the lives of his wife and children from his murderous superiors, is strong armed into building a brutal death camp - Auschwitz - where he meets a saintly prisoner determined to defy the camp agenda of cruelty with acts of mercy.
- CONFLICT OF VALUES: Mercy vs. Cruelty (or) Repression vs. Forgiveness
- MORAL PREMISE: Pursuit of cruelty leads to death; but pursuit of mercy leads to life.
- PROTAGONIST: Rudolf Höss, Auschwitz kommandant
- ANTAGONIST: Mary personified in Maximilian Kolbe, a Franciscan Priest
- HÖSS'S GOAL: Protect his family from Nazi cruelty, by being cruel to others
- KOLBE'S GOAL: Show mercy to all
- DISTRIBUTION: Worldwide
- LANGUAGE: English (to facilitate worldwide distribution)

COMMENTS FROM *AUSTIN SCREENPLAY AWARDS*

These comments are from an earlier draft of the script titled WHEN WE WERE GODS

When We Were Gods is a script dripping with personality. This is reflected in the unique characters, but also in the inventive action description evident from the humorous first line “Much of this is true.”

The writer does a wonderful job of presenting the story in a very visual way, showing their own specific style in the description. There’s often slight editorializing, humor, and colorful analogy that makes for entertaining moment-to-moment reading.

Throw in varied language and syntax and the action was often as entertaining as the scintillating dialogue. The writer’s style is always present, but it doesn’t get distracting.

The plot isn’t buried under unnecessary detail or overly literary language. The action still remains concise and clear, just a bit beyond rote fact delivery. Again, there’s personality.

I also like how the script works in a lot of conversations surrounding philosophy and religion. It’s never too preachy in a message, but the characters constantly have their ideologies tested in ways that often go beyond a straight conversation.

Actions and plot points force characters’ backs against

a wall where words must be backed up with conviction and action.

Knowing early on what each character believes and seeing the differences in worldview clash is a real highlight of the script. It shapes the internal conflict and often leads to the more obvious physical challenges. It’s also presented in such a way that eschews melodrama. With the WWII backdrop, it can be tempting to rely on easy clichés or uninventive plot points. When We Were Gods does well to forge its own path.



This script succeeds because of fantastic characters and solid structure. These two qualities make for the bedrock of any good script, but this narrative has a lot of other positives on top of this.

Ever escalating tension, great moment-to-moment writing in the action description, impressive formatting – these all add up to give the impression of a very professional script.

I enjoyed my time with this story because it swings for the fences with interesting plot points, but gives us a reason to care about the action with nuanced characters.

A good read from beginning to end.

COMMENTS FROM *THE BLACKLIST*

WHEN WE WERE GODS begins with a stunning opening sequence, which stylistically indicts the audience itself in the horrors of fascist rule and the concept of “following orders” in a wholly affecting and disturbing way.

From there, the reader is whisked along on a harrowing journey of heartless depravity, cruelty, entitlement, and violence, which is then juxtaposed against grace, faith, selflessness, and beauty.

The story is a difficult one, filled with injustices and truly disturbing moments and sequences, staying true to its historical basis, but also taking on symbolic flourishes to tell the tale in a thoughtful and engaging way that is ultimately strong.

It lightly recalls MERRY CHRISTMAS, MR. LAWRENCE, while also touching upon grotesque and exploitative elements of more disturbing Nazi-based films, such as IN A GLASS CAGE.

A dream sequence - in which Höss is tied to a cross and nearly drowned - is riveting and beautiful, and the way the story ties into the atomic bombing of Nagasaki is poetic.

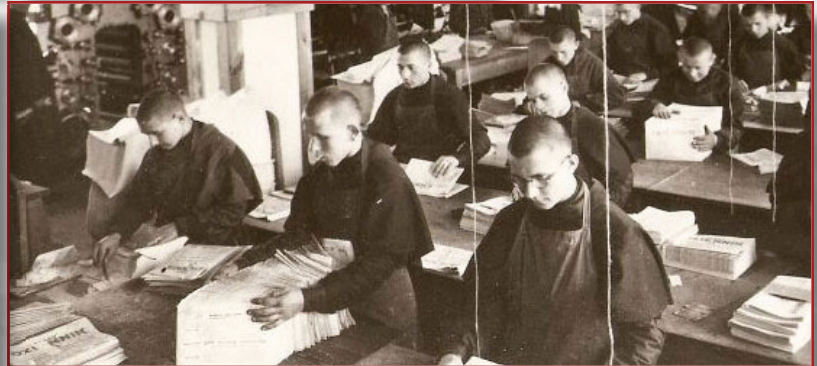
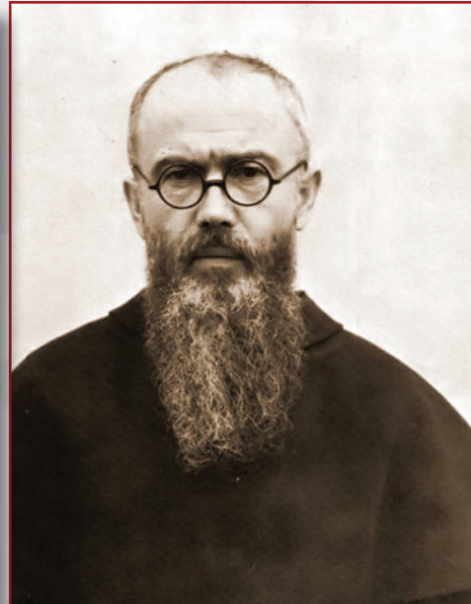
There’s also a good moment where Höss plays with his little daughter, pretending to be a monster.


This is a very good script, with some truly beautiful and visionary moments. It’s a very powerful story that still somehow remains untold in cinema.

WHEN WE WERE GODS is an emotionally charged and engaging script that introduces something new to the conversation within the genre rather than relying upon themes that have been explored in previous films.

This adds a sense of urgency to the project and gives it potential to move forward as a viable film project.

If done well, this kind of movie could generate awards talk.





*There is a crime here that goes beyond denunciation.
There is a sorrow here that weeping cannot symbolize.
There is a failure here that topples all our successes.*

—John Steinbeck

RICH MAURO, SCREENWRITER

For many years I knew the story about Polish priest Maximilian Kolbe and how at Auschwitz as prisoner No. 16770, he mercifully volunteered to take the place of another man in the starvation bunker. What I didn't know was that Auschwitz Kommandant Rudolf Höss had been dedicated as a child to Mary at Lourdes and when young, Höss took serious his father's request to be a priest. But things happened and Höss becomes history's worst mass murderer.

And, then, much to my amazement I learned that Kolbe's campaign of mercy at Auschwitz had an effect. When Höss was on death row for his crimes against humanity, no priest would come to his prison cell to hear Höss's confession. The only priest that would finally come was Władysław Lohn, a priest that Höss had let go from the camp many years earlier. Höss's single act of mercy for Fr. Lohn was evidently an act that would later open the possibility of him receiving mercy from God. This is the way God challenges the human condition and this story reflects the very core of what our human condition struggles with every day—the ability to forgive.

My emotional connection to the Höss-Kolbe story and what inspired me to write *When We Were Gods* was a personal and very sad experience that, nonetheless, revealed to me the importance of forgiveness and its transformative power.

My parents, who mattered a great deal to me, had retired to a small village in Maryland. During the week my Dad volunteered at local charities, and on Sunday they attended Mass with my maternal grandmother. One lazy Sunday, shortly after returning home to Mass with my wife and 4 children, I received a phone call from a friend of my parents. She was hysterical, crying, and I could hardly understand what she was trying to tell me. But finally, I did.



Just after Mass my parents and grandmother were standing in front of their church talking to friends. Suddenly, a car drove backwards into them. While no one else was injured, my mother, father, and grandmother were killed. I lived a thousand miles away, but my devastation, to say nothing of the anger and thirst for revenge, was very close. The pain and agony caused to me and my sister was indescribable. As my wife helped me drive to Maryland, I sank quickly into what clinicians call Traumatic Grief. I could barely think. But I did, over and over—how could this have happened?

What happened was this. An elderly woman, in a hurry to leave Mass, rushed to her parked car near where my parents stood. In her hurry to leave the parking lot she put the car into reverse instead of drive. When the car started to back up she discovered her mistake and stepped on the brake. But her foot missed the brake pedal and instead hit the accelerator. The car suddenly accelerated backwards, not what she was thinking. And since for every action there is an equal but opposite re-action, her body accelerated forwards pushing her foot uncontrollably and even further down on the accelerator. And it was all over. My parents had been standing but feet behind her car.

Days later at the funeral an old woman I did not know walked into the funeral parlor, if you want to call the shaking she was experiencing walking. She was also sobbing uncontrollably. My sister, who was in the depths of traumatic grief herself, pulled on my sleeve and to said simply, "That's her."

At that instance, in spite of this woman's age and emotional debilitation, part of me wanted to grab this woman and strangle her. I wanted her to feel the pain I was feeling in that moment.

But this old woman, who had wiped out my family, had courageously come to my parents and grandmother's funeral in tears and totally beside herself to humbly seek my forgiveness and mercy. Could I do it? Could I forgive her?

Before I knew it, the woman and I were hugging each other and both crying our hearts out. And I was transformed and released from my debilitating grief.

Now the experience of my parents accidentally being killed is not nearly as bad had they been killed maliciously in a concentration camp. And it's nowhere close to being tortured, bludgeoned and starved by murderous guards. But that is what Maximilian Kolbe experienced, and he found within him, by God's mercy and his Polish values, the ability to avoid revenge, bitterness and instead forgive, and show mercy.

Thus, *The Confession of Auschwitz's Kommandant* is the true story about the power of mercy in a place you'd least expect to find it—Auschwitz, the largest of the Nazi concentration camps where millions of innocent people were terrorized, beaten, executed, and their bodies incinerated. It's the story of the camp Kommandant, Rudolf Höss, and his run in with one of the greatest saints of our time.

AUSCHWITZ - FIELD

Jailed Höss suffocates but not before he sees, beyond the crowd...

JAILED HÖSS'S POV

Yellow dandelions grow along the fence behind the crowd. In fact, dandelions have reclaimed the camp and bloom everywhere.

BACK TO SCENE

Shocked, Jailed Höss stares, then hangs motionless.

JAILED HÖSS'S VISION: EXT. UNDERWATER - NIGHT

Höss gives up and closes his eyes. Bubbles amass underneath the iron cross, slowing the cross's descent. Finally, the cross shifts direction and rises.

In beautiful imagery, the bubbles amass so much in the rising of the cross we lose sight of Höss upon it.

SURFACE OF WATER - NIGHT

Moonlight reflects off the peaceful surface of the water.

Suddenly, the iron cross -- to which Höss's wrists and ankles are still cuffed to the cross with iron manacles -- explodes through the surface. It bobs and miraculously floats just below the surface with Höss's face barely above the water. He gasps for air as waves ripple over his mouth.

There is no sight of the barge. Instead, a glorious blazing sun rises in the distance.

Opening his eyes and looking aloft, HÖSS SCREAMS.

CUT TO BLACK.

STAN WILLIAMS, EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

As a script and story consultant I read a lot of scripts and I coach writers to create stories that connect emotionally with mainstream audiences. They come to me not just from Hollywood but from all imaginable strata of the entertainment industry. Early in 2016 I was in Florida visiting friends and shooting a documentary when I spent an afternoon with Rich Mauro who pitched me this story.

I was immediately attracted to the classic conflict of good versus evil, in the characters of the Nazi SS. Auschwitz kommandant, Rudolf Höss, and the Polish Franciscan priest, Maximilian Kolbe. I knew the story of how Kolbe volunteered to take the place of a Polish father in the starvation bunker, died a martyr for his faith, and was later canonized a Saint by the first ever Polish pope John Paul II. The story has been told many times in essays, documentaries and films.

But Rich's script was unique. He wasn't telling the story of a saint, but of a devil, the man who would go down in history as the world's most villainous mass murderer. Although Höss blames his actions entirely on the Nazi hierarchy, most notably the orders of Heinrich Himmler, Rudolf Höss was, by his own admission, directly responsible for the death of millions of Poles, Germans, gypsies, Jehovah Witnesses, homosexuals, criminals, so called asocials, political adversaries, and Jews. And particularly, he had it in for Catholic priests.

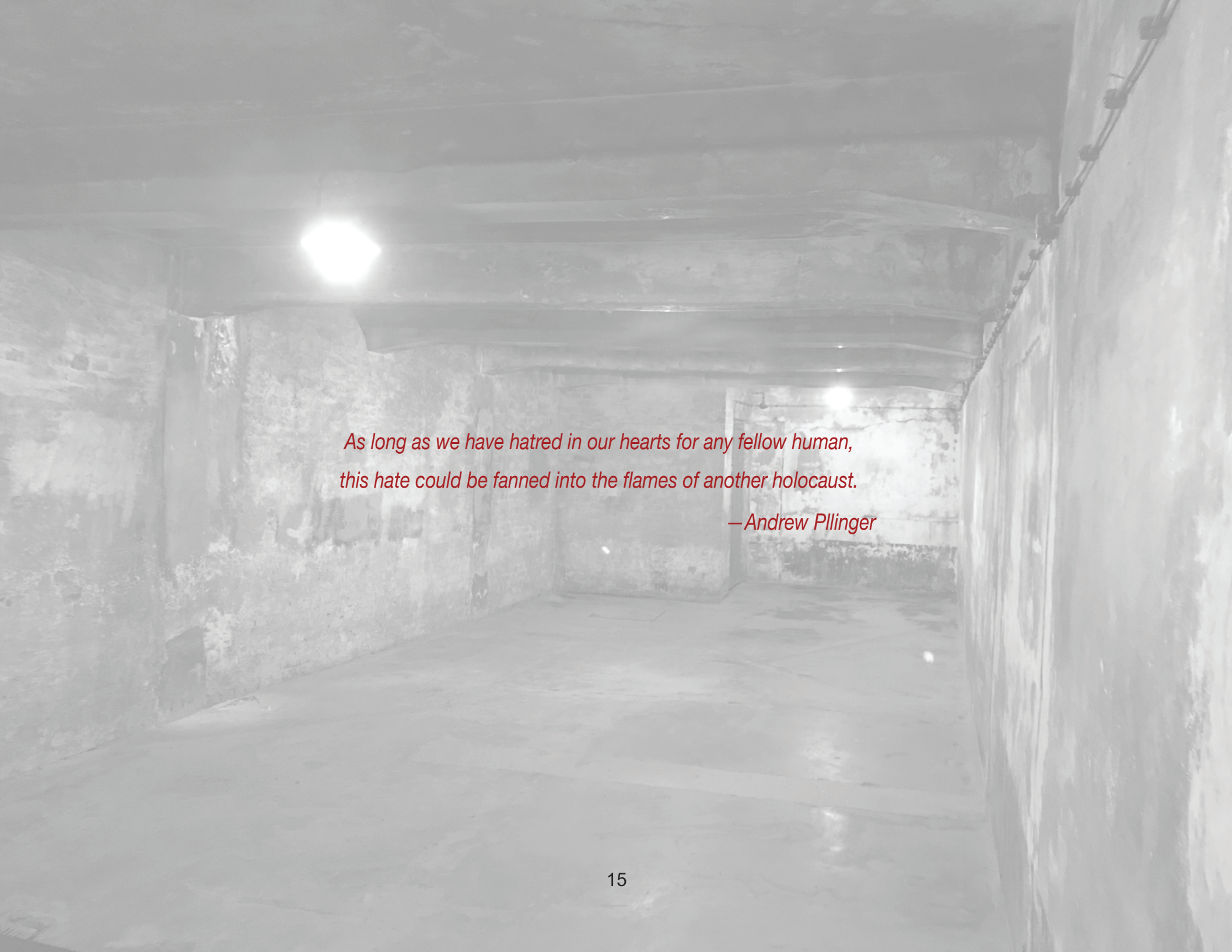


So, Rich's script had an intriguing new perspective, one that is normally avoided—Rudolf Höss was the story's protagonist who arcs in a peculiar and unknown way that is nonetheless well documented in history, except that few people read history anymore. And who was his antagonist, the character that forces the protagonist to change and transform? The good guy—Father Maximilian Kolbe, a man dedicated to the

merciful heart of Jesus Christ as personified in the life of his mother, Mary.

I was astonished to discover that Rudolf Höss was raised in strict but loving Catholic family, who encouraged young Höss to be a priest. Höss's father went so far to take his son to Lourdes, France, and dedicate him to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, the very force that Höss would encounter through the life of his Auschwitz prisoner Kolbe. As we know, Kolbe is murdered. But what happens to Höss is almost unimaginable. And that was the hook for a story that I could not ignore.

For the years since, I've worked with Rich to polish his script, which was a recent semi-finalist in the *Fade In True Story* Hollywood screenplay contest, and now I'm the project's proud and excited Executive Producer looking for partners to help us get this profound story of forgiveness and mercy into WWW society's awareness.



*As long as we have hatred in our hearts for any fellow human,
this hate could be fanned into the flames of another holocaust.*

—Andrew Pllinger

He looks close at the sketch of 16670.

JAILED HÖSS

Being a priest would no longer be in my destiny. Only sacrifice. I'd just had no idea what my sacrifice would be.

Lohn listens intently. Jailed Höss stares off into the past.

FLASHBACK EXT. VILLA - BACKYARD - MORNING - 1939

Cupcake, the family's mangy cat, sits on a tree branch.

SUPER: "OŚWIĘCIM, POLAND, SUMMER 1939"

Höss (now the age he was in the opening flashback), dressed in a black S.S. uniform, climbs a branch to save the cat. Höss grabs Cupcake but slips and falls to the ground.

The two girls run to get the cat. Höss hands the cat to Brigitte, but Höss's hair is a wild mess from the fall.

BRIGITTE

Daddy, you look like a monster.

HÖSS

That's because I am one.

Höss growls, grabs and tickles both girls. They laugh.

In the distance a TRAIN'S HORN. Höss rounds up and listens. The HORN BLOWS again. He turns solemn.

He stands up, brushes himself off, and puts on his game face.

PRE-LAP A RIFLE DISCHARGES -- BAM!

EXT. AUSCHWITZ CONCENTRATION CAMP - BARRACKS - DAY

On a mud path, CROWS SQUAWK and fight for something bloody.

A second RIFLE DISCHARGES O.S. -- BAM!

One of the crows is blown to smithereens. The others scatter.

In the b.g. rows of old wooden army barracks repurposed as a prison labor camp. Rag-covered prisoners and their armed guards turn in shock toward the crow's remains.

SUPER: "AUSCHWITZ CONCENTRATION CAMP, OŚWIĘCIM, POLAND"

A RIFLE lowers to reveal S.S. Concentration Camp Overseer, Bader. His S.S. blacks and boots could use some polish.

SUPER: "GERHARD BADER, S.S. NAZI CONCENTRATION CAMP OVERSEER."



BADER

Sad creatures. Always waiting for something to die so they can eat.

As Bader walks O.S. toward the crows he reveals ADOLF EICHMANN (33), also in blacks and boots, wearing a smirk.

SUPER: "ADOLF EICHMANN, S.S. NAZI OVERSEER OF THE JEWS FINAL SOLUTION."

Bader knocks aside the dead crow. Near its beak is a severed, bloody, human ear.

BADER

Prison justice. They're getting less and less creative these days.

Bader plucks up the ear, sniffs it, turns it over examining it, and finally hands it off to Höss, who holds out a white handkerchief into which Bader stuffs the ear.

BADER

(to Höss)

Make sure it's not one of ours.

Höss hands off the bloody handkerchief to a guard and dismisses him. The three men walk on.

EICHMANN

I have decided your remote location and proximity to train lines make it ideal for the Final Solution.

HÖSS

We're a labor camp in the backwoods of nowhere with limited resources.

EICHMANN

Ideal for secrecy. No one can know. Not even family. Verstanden?

Höss nods, but objects.

HÖSS

The guards hate being executioners. Many commit suicide just to avoid it. How is that going to work?

Eichmann glares at Höss as if he's a complete idiot.

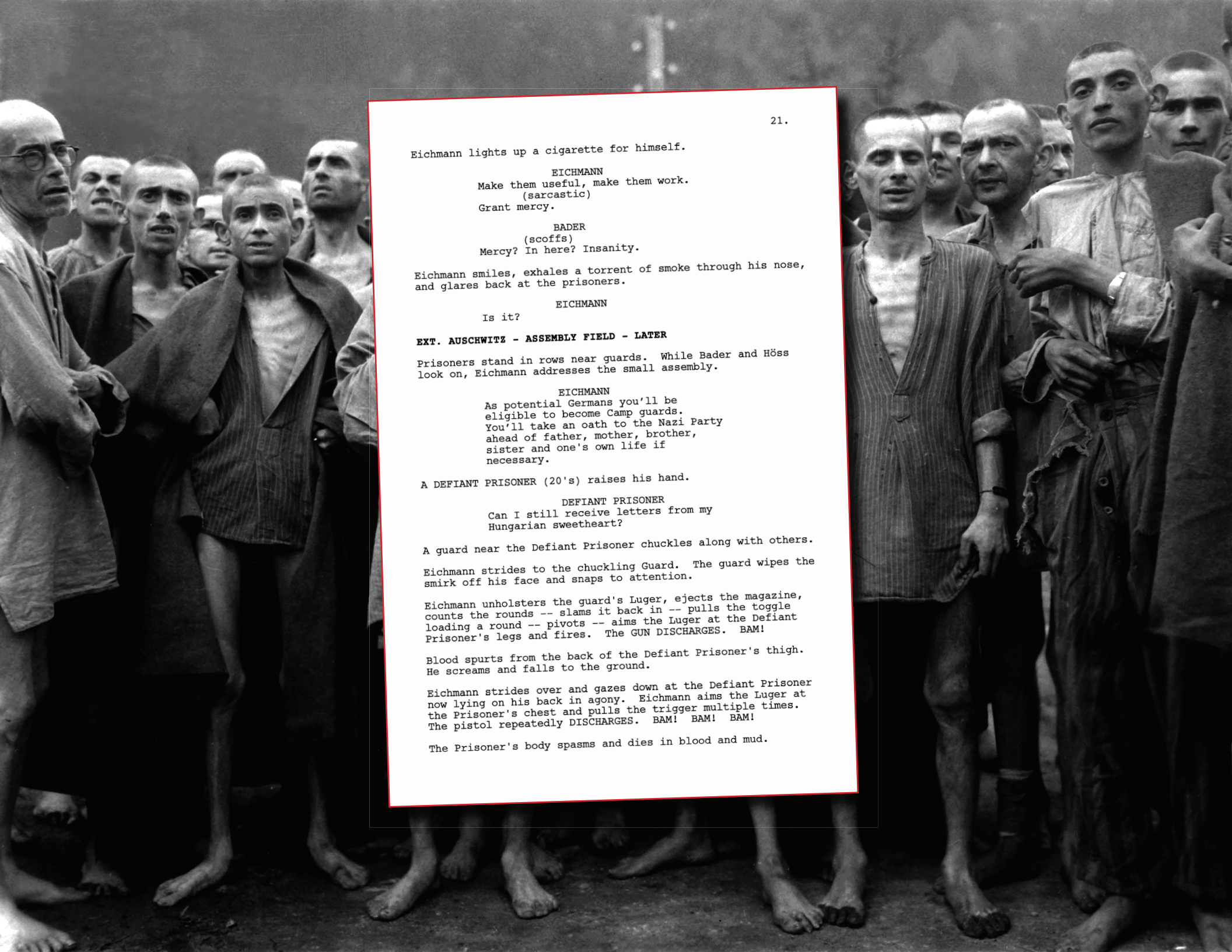
EICHMANN

You should consider it a honor.

Höss nods solemnly then turns to look O.S.

HÖSS

And what of the non-Jewish prisoners?



Eichmann lights up a cigarette for himself.

EICHMANN
Make them useful, make them work.
(sarcastic)
Grant mercy.

BADER
(scoffs)
Mercy? In here? Insanity.

Eichmann smiles, exhales a torrent of smoke through his nose,
and glares back at the prisoners.

EICHMANN
Is it?

EXT. AUSCHWITZ - ASSEMBLY FIELD - LATER

Prisoners stand in rows near guards. While Bader and Höss
look on, Eichmann addresses the small assembly.

EICHMANN
As potential Germans you'll be
eligible to become Camp guards.
You'll take an oath to the Nazi Party
ahead of father, mother, brother,
sister and one's own life if
necessary.

A DEFIANT PRISONER (20's) raises his hand.

DEFIANT PRISONER
Can I still receive letters from my
Hungarian sweetheart?

A guard near the Defiant Prisoner chuckles along with others.

Eichmann strides to the chuckling Guard. The guard wipes the
smirk off his face and snaps to attention.

Eichmann unholsters the guard's Luger, ejects the magazine,
counts the rounds -- slams it back in -- pulls the toggle
loading a round -- pivots -- aims the Luger at the Defiant
Prisoner's legs and fires. The GUN DISCHARGES. BAM!

Blood spurts from the back of the Defiant Prisoner's thigh.
He screams and falls to the ground.

Eichmann strides over and gazes down at the Defiant Prisoner
now lying on his back in agony. Eichmann aims the Luger at
the Prisoner's chest and pulls the trigger multiple times.
The pistol repeatedly DISCHARGES. BAM! BAM! BAM!

The Prisoner's body spasms and dies in blood and mud.



Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.

—George Santayana



RUDOLF HÖSS

(NOVEMBER 25, 1900 – APRIL 16, 1947)

Rudolf Höss was born and raised into a loving but strict Catholic family in Baden-Baden, Germany. As a young boy, Rudolf was dedicated to the Mother of Jesus at Lourdes, France by his father. He went to confession weekly, was an altar boy at his parish, and had the encouragement of his extended family to attend seminary to be a priest. But his confessor, a close friend of his father's, broke the seal of confession, and young Rudolf discovered the retribution of his father. Then, World War I broke out, his strict father died, and Rudolf discovered that that being a soldier was in his blood. Even after WWI, he found solace and camaraderie in a group of private mercenaries fighting wars for other countries. As he traveled the world, with tools of his killing trade in hand, his heart grew cold and hard to all the unimaginable horrors that the atrocities of war offers...and the hypocritical profiteering of church men in the Holy land at the expensive of Christian pilgrims. Finding his way back to the Fatherland, he was done with religion, at least the Christian kind. Instead he turned his allegiance to his country and family. Shortly, thereafter, at the request of a friend, Heimlich Himmler, Rudolf Höss join the S.S., and as they say, the rest is history. He died at Auschwitz, on the feast of St. Bernadette.

To play this role we hope to attach someone like Daniel Brühl (Rush, Captain America Civil War, The Alienist)



MAXIMILIAN KOLBE

(JANUARY 8, 1894 – AUGUST 14, 1941)

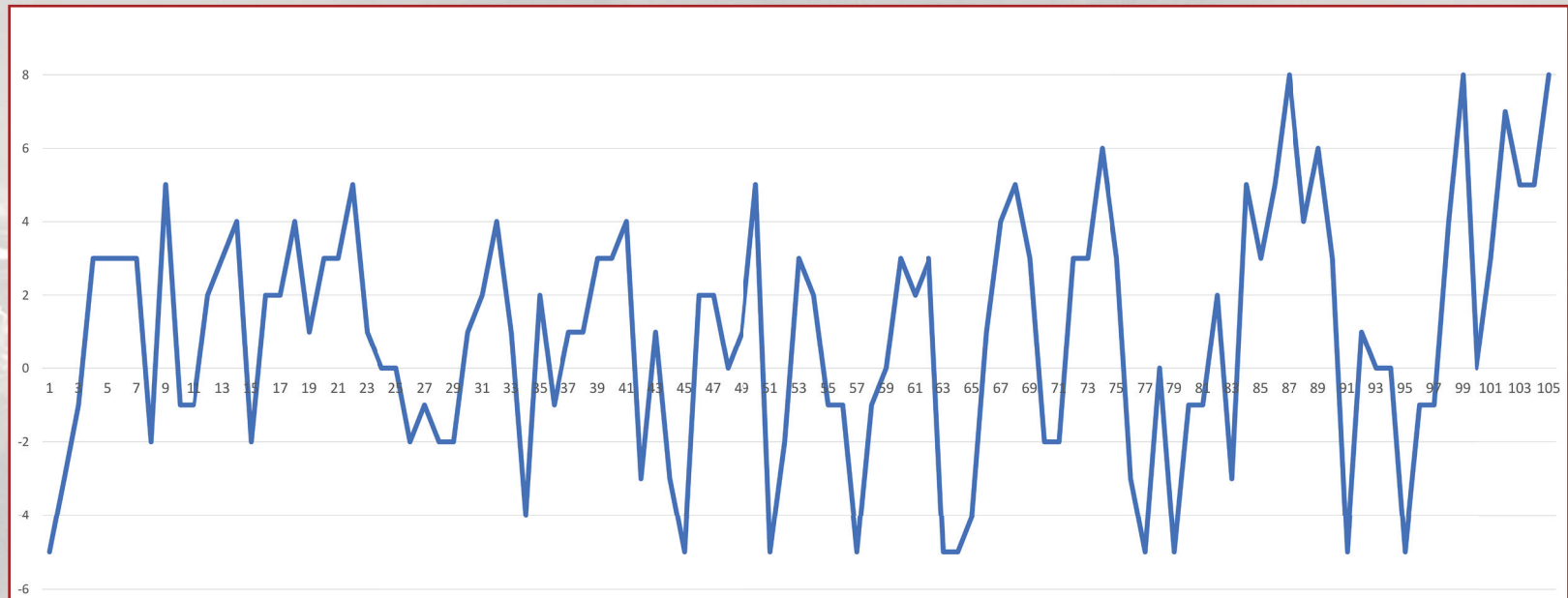


Raymund Kolbe was born and raised into a loving Catholic family in Zduńska Wola, Kingdom of Poland, which was then part of the Russian Empire. At a child Raymund wanted to be a soldier, but at the age of 12 he experienced a vision of the Virgin Mary. “That night I asked the Mother of God what was to become of me. Then she came to me holding two crowns, one white, the other red. She asked me if I was willing to accept either of these crowns. The white one meant that I should persevere in purity, and the red that I should become a martyr. I said that I would accept them both.” In 1907 he and his older brother, Francis, became Conventional Franciscans, and he took the name Maximilian. He earned two doctorates, one in philosophy and another in theology. While studying in Rome he witnessed the vicious attacks of the Free Masons on the Papacy. This motivated him to organized the Militia Immaculate (Army of the Immaculate One—Mary) to work for the conversion of sinners and enemies of the Catholic Church. He suffered from tuberculosis, which was usually fatal, but he continued his work, establishing a publishing and radio ministry in Poland, Japan, and India. The publishing ministry spread through Poland and occasionally published anti-Nazi issues. On February 17, 1941 the monastery and publishing activity were shut down by German authorities, Kolbe and a few others were arrested. A few months later he was transferred to Auschwitz. Two months later, when a prisoner escaped from his barrack, 10 men were sent to block 11 to starve to death. One man, Franciszek Gajowniczek and a stranger to Kolbe, begged not to be sent. Kolbe volunteered to go in his place. After weeks of starvation he was still alive. Höss ordered the bunker be cleared, and Kolbe was killed on August 13, 1941 by a shot of carbonic acid. The next day, his body was incinerated on the feast of the Assumption of Mary. He was canonized as Saint Maximilian Kolbe by John Paul 2, the first Polish Pope, on October 10, 1982. Franciszek Gajowniczek was in attendance.

To play this role we hope to attach someone like Jim Caviezel (The Passion of Christ, Thin Red Line, The Count of Monte Cristo)

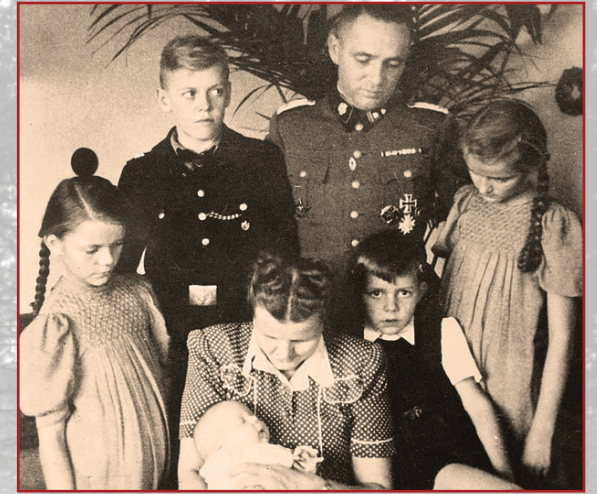
THE STORY'S EMOTIONAL ROLLER COASTER

A motion picture's popularity with audiences, in part, rests on the emotional roller coaster it creates over the major questions the picture asks: Will Rudolf Höss be able to protect his family from the cruelty of the Nazi party? And will he be able to resist the mercy offered by his persistent prisoner, Maximilian Kolbe?



Predictive emotional roller coaster based on a recent script for When We Were Gods. Page 1 at left, page 106 at right.

(This graph is from an earlier draft of When We Were Gods)



I've sinned against all of humanity.

I am to pay for this with my life.

God forgive me what I have done.

I ask the Polish people for forgiveness.

—Rudolf Höss



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